

THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume II - No. 28

Greensburg, Indiana

April 25, 1966

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mr. Rolland Kirby
Mrs. Rolland Kirby
Dr. Delton Shazer
Mrs. Delton Shazer
Mrs. Paul Holbrook
Miss Phoebe J. Harrison
Mrs. Mabel Bobbitt-Waldron
Mrs. Martha Luken
Mr. Edward Cramer
Mr. Larry Baker
Mr. Carl Hessler
Mrs. Carl Hessler
Rev. Carl Riebenthaler
Mr. Gerald T. Kelsch-Peoria, Ill.
Mrs. Maurice Osting
Mrs. Ruth Shouse-Manilla, Ind.
Mrs. John Batterton
Mr. William Parmer-Middletown, Ind.
Mr. Bertis C. Parmer-Santa Fe,
New Mexico
Mrs. Anthony Moorman
Mrs. Edwin Kessler
Mrs. Lawrence Dudley
Mr. Robert E. Lee-Indpls. 548

OCCASION: Spring meeting
SPEAKER: Hon. Willard Low
DATE: Saturday, May 7th,
1966 at 8:00 P. M.
Fast time
PLACE: Billings Elementary
School, West Washing-
ton Street, Greensburg,
Indiana

Mr. Low, a resident of Westport, formerly the druggist there and a retired teacher, currently is serving in the State Legislature as joint representative from Decatur and Jennings counties..... In keeping with the Sesquicentennial Year, he comes to us with a program, illustrated with slides, on SOUTHERN INDIANA. Let us hope that Mr. Low does not go so far afield, that he neglects our own community of Westport, which abounds in Hoosier lore.

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NEVER TOO LATE - A recent issue of the HOOSIER LEGIONNAIRE has an article concerning a citation for Mrs. Sarah Newman by the local Welsh-Crawley-Kramer Post No. 129. Aside from her devotion to veterans and veteran's rehabilitation, Mrs. Newman "maintains a complete record of all deceased veterans in Decatur County from the War of 1812 to the present." Except for the law requiring that copies of the local newspaper be bound and filed in the county recorder's office, is there anyone except Mrs. Newman that is making an effort to keep a record of such vital statistics? Sarah Newman for your untiring efforts in the field of history particularly on the local level - we salute you!

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1966

President-----John Parker
1st. Vice-President--Mrs. Dorothy Doles
2nd. Vice-President-----Dr. D. D. Dickson
Corresponding Secy.---Mrs. Robert Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul, Indiana
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K. Bussell, 711 North East St., Greensburg, Indiana
Treasurer-----Miss Mary E. Craig

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SPRING IS HERE

The winter's snows are melting fast
And spring is in the offing.
I'm sure this winter's in the past
For I have stopped my coughing.

Now snow flakes are a wondrous sight-
They are of God's creation.
But they can rarely compensate
For prolonged hibernation.

The ides of March will bring on rains
Which surely are deploring,
But May brings on the flowers which
Keep all our spirits soaring.

Well let it rain, or let it snow;
Tear all storm clouds asunder
But keep my poor wife's nerves serene,
'Cause she's afraid of thunder.

T. O. T.

I like it because it is
homespun-ed

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Manilla, Indiana
February 10, 1966

Dear Editor:

Had I known sixty years ago, that I would become so interested in the older generations of my family, I would have started putting all the information I could learn on paper much sooner.

My great grandfather Dr. Uriah Price was born in Bellefontaine, Ohio. For a number of years he lived on a farm just East of New Pennington school house and practiced medicine in the surrounding community. I presume he travelled by horse drawn buggy or cart or possibly rode horse-back.

From all reports I've ever heard, he was a very good medical doctor. At one time there was an epidemic of diptheria and Dr. Price made up a medicine that cured and saved many of the suffering people. He used many home grown herbs and plants in medicine.

Dr. Price married Lavina Pharoah and they were blessed with five children, namely Phoebe, Mary Jane, John H., Amos and Rachel Ann, who married John H. Castor. They (the Castors) were blessed with three sons, Lewis who died at the age of ten months and seven days, John H., Jr. and William Clay my father.

Besides being a good doctor he and Mrs. Price once took an infant of a neighbor that was left motherless and cared for the child until the child's father remarried.

To my knowledge he has two grand children living in Dyersburg, Tennessee and many great and great great grand children. Two great granddaughters became registered nurses and one great great grandson became a doctor, Cecil W. Castor, M. D. of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

On the last time Dr. Price was to visit his family at Bellefontaine, it was a cold rainy day and in going from the railroad station to the home, his clothes and shoes became quite damp, so it seems in his eagerness to see and visit with his family, he never thought of changing his damp clothes for dry ones. As a result he became ill with a cold and contracted pneumonia.

Dr. Price passed away at the home of his family in Bellefontaine, Ohio, January 12, 1879, aged 62 years, 9 months and 12 days. It has been said had he looked after his own health as he had for others, he could have lived years longer.

His widow Lavina passed away September 26, 1897. Both rest in the old part of Roszburg Cemetery, North of New Point, Indiana.

Respectfully,

Ruth Castor Shouse

Mrs. Shouse is a new member but a devoted one-ed

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Occasionally there is a mix-up concerning the payment of dues. This happens because for one reason or another, payment is not sent to the proper person--this being the Recording Secretary. PLEASE DIRECT ALL MATTERS OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE RECORDING SECRETARY. Her address--

Miss Helen K. Bussell
711 N. East St.
Greensburg, Indiana

"When a people begin to forget their hard beginnings, they begin to decay."- Carl Sandburg

BACK ISSUES--Anyone interested in back issues of the BULLETIN may have those copies that are available by writing the Editor.

ARCHIVES--The Society is the recipient of and acknowledges with thanks a handsome volume entitled LAYNE-LAIN-LANE GENEALOGY. A work begun in 1911 and published in 1962, it represents the efforts of a life time, to collect and document the history of the Layne family. Spell it Lain or Lane if you wish. Members bearing this family name are urged to send data on their family to Floyd Benjamin Layne, 2236 San Marco Drive, Los Angeles 28, California.

THEN AND NOW- The following Decatur County towns had post-offices in 1879, all told twenty-four. Today there are eight including Adams, which is classed as a rural station. Burney had no post-office in 1879. Here is another subject for a future meeting- our postal history. More interesting than you think!

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| * Adams | * New Point |
| Alert | Saint Maurice |
| * Clarksburg | Saint Omer |
| Clifty | * Saint Paul |
| Enochsburg- Franklin co. | Sardinia |
| Ewington | Springhill |
| Forest Hill | Tarkeo |
| Gaynorsville | Waynesburgh |
| * Greensburgh | * Westport |
| Kingston | Williamstown |
| Lett's Corners | Wintersville |
| McCoy's Station | Harris City |
| * Millhousen | |

* Today including Burney

THE LAST MEETING- The seventh annual dinner meeting held early in December, has passed into history, marked as it was, by the largest attendance yet and the interest displayed--the greatest. The dinner served in the pleasant atmosphere of the high school cafeteria was, as always, enjoyed by all.....It would be anticlimactic to discuss the affair any further, since the local press, as is their habit covered the event so well.....We believe that the annual dinner meeting of the Society is one of the nicer social events of the season, and that, which makes for this is people- the good members giving of their time and effort, for which their only reward is the inner satisfaction of having done a job well. We think they deserve special mention here, somewhat as follows:

Mrs. Nolan Skinner for her untiring efforts all year, and particularly for arranging the dinner meeting.....Miss Milicent Huber ably assisted by Mrs. Chas. Walls for their novel ideas of decoration- especially the picture post cards that caught on so well.....Rounding up three tables of antiques was no small chore for William Parker and Ivan Bailey. The display as always was a feature of the meeting- it made for conversation amongst the A. A. (antique addicts) crowd.....Mr. Bailey again scored, along with Mrs. Walter Lowe and Mrs. James Shannon on reception- how nice it was for guests attending for the first time to be made welcome.....Hardly a part of the show but important nevertheless, was the nominating committee, consisting of Donald Minning, Miss Gladys Aldrich and Mrs. Frank Clark. Theirs was the work of several evenings before the main event as was that of the auditing committee headed up by Miss Mary Craig- Mrs. Bertha Alexander and Mrs. Elbert Richards assisting.....For other entertainment, there was Mrs. Alouise Kessler on the organ playing old melodies- but tune-ful....."Unhonored and unsung"- they would have it no other way, were the callers- much of the success of the meeting was due the callers. Bless them!.....Our president in the role of conducting the meeting, was in there "pitching" too as they say- so much so, that he was the

unanimous choice to again lead us in 1966.....Last but not least- the Sweets from Carmel, speaking on EARLY AMERICAN LIVING. What a team they were!.....To use an old phrase- it was quite an evening!

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EARLY ARTISTS OF DECATUR COUNTY

Decatur County's cultural history would not be complete without a record of its pictorial art, although, unfortunately, few paintings from the early period are to be found.....Several of the productions of Wilbur Woodward and Lotta Guffin are preserved in obscure museums in New York and Paris, and one at least may be seen at John Herron in Indianapolis. The popularity of both these Decatur County natives endured through the 1870s and '80s.

Early artists of local fame include Captain Silas Rigby and Robert Moulton.

After the Civil War Capt. Rigby took up housepainting for a livelihood, and, in spare time, developed much skill in portrait and landscape painting. He followed the mode of the Dutch and Italian masters.

Bob Moulton, remembered by many older citizens of New Point, followed the same pattern of artistry, having a natural talent for line and color.

Three Alert women who attained much skill in pictorial art in the 1890s were Miss Rose Clayton, a Miss Shafer and a Miss Talkington. The first two painted in oils. Miss Talkington used a pantograph to produce crayon portraits that were accurate and very popular in that period. Mrs. Joe Moss and her pupil, the late Mrs. Maude Kitchin Johnston, produced drawings and paintings of merit.

The late Harry Ballard of St. Paul had a successful career as a theatrical scene painter and later as an engraving company's artist in Detroit.

Illness and death interrupted the artistic lives of Miss Rebecca Wirt and Miss Marie Hunt.

Also cut short was the career of Wilbur Woodward, who died at the age of 29, after having distinguished himself in international art exhibits, including Paris and Rome salons. He was born at St. Omer in 1851. At the age of 10 he enlisted as a Civil War drummer boy but was soon released. His family settled at Lawrenceburg. He was accepted in his teens as a student in a Cincinnati art school, and at 20 he went to Europe for seven years of study in the best schools. In addition to his exceptional art productions he became proficient in seven languages.

Charlotte Hillis was born on a farm south of Greensburg in 1844. In some odd manner that family traditions have not explained her name came to be spelled Hollis while she was in school. At the age of 20

she was married to Henry Clay Guffin, which accounts for the signature on her paintings--Lotta Guffin.

For several years Charlotte pursued a music career. She studied in Cincinnati, later becoming a member of the music faculty at Northwestern Christian University (now Butler) in Indianapolis. In the Hoosier capital she took up art under Jacob Cox. From there she went to New York for a period of study, returning to Indianapolis to compete with the best artists. Her pictures brought good prices. She died in Chicago in 1896.

Smiley Fowler

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THE RINK

A building is not just a mass of sticks and stones; neither is it something we should value entirely because of age or beauty. As time goes by and we are intimately associated with it, it becomes dear to our hearts and deeply enshrined in our memories.....Such a building was the old Rink which stood at the corner of Monfort and West Washington streets. Although its life was short, it was a merry one. Again and again through the years, it spread its great gray wings to shelter the community life of Greensburg. If we recall one by one, the many events which took place within its walls, we will find an interesting page of our city's history.

One of the delightful ways to preserve our historic landmarks is through traditions and legends of the past.

During the late eighties a craze for roller skating swept over the country. Everyone wanted to skate, young and old, big and little. They all took to wheels and went skimming about. Every building possible, was used for skating although many were entirely unsuitable. There was urgent need for a good skating floor.

About 1885 Jim Smith became interested in this as a business venture. Since he was not a man of money, he was financed by Wm. S. (Bill) Woodfill who so kindly and generously financed many Greensburg ventures.

Mr. Smith bought the lot at Monfort and West Washington and built a large one story building on it. It was extremely plain and barnlike in appearance, but it had a marvelous hardwood maple floor, 60 by 160 feet in size, which was a joy to skaters and dancers forever after. From that day the Rink became a rendezvous for pleasure seekers.

Not many people remember Jim Smith but a lot of them remember his sister-in-law Claribel Winchester who taught us how to sing. The family all lived together on North Broadway.

In those days skates could be rented at the Hall, and this gave everyone a chance to enjoy the fun. There were skating races- contests

and skating parties. There was even a King and Queen of skaters. While they were not chosen by vote, there was an understanding on the part of the public who they were because of their unusual grace and skill. Chas. Woodfill proved to be a King of skaters and Rose Ketchum Donnell was Queen for many a day.

Many have memories of those days. Van Woodfill can tell you how boys schemed to skate for nothing and Esta Hiner says she ruined the best dress she ever had skating at the Rink.

Perhaps the most unique thing of all was the Skating Band. The old Town Band fitted themselves with skates and gave concerts and exhibitions as they went toodling about. They toured all of southern Indiana and even spent a week in Louisville entertaining.

They were a group of talented musicians who played in the summer on Saturday nights, on the corners of the Square hoping to drum up trade for the merchants. Instead of "Moonlight Madness" and such they furnished us band concerts.

Their leader Marsh Thomas also had a magnificent voice which the people loved to hear on all occasions. Those were days when you didn't just suddenly turn on your music and talented musicians were loved and cherished by the whole community.

In the course of a few years the skating fad subsided, and the Rink was used for other things. Having a big stage it was perfect for many things; public speaking, traveling shows and home talent theatricals so popular at that time.

During the county's great temperance reform movement of about 1890 Frances Murphy a noted speaker addressed enormous crowds there. People flocked to the front to sign a temperance pledge and receive one of the small white bows which everyone was wearing. The common greeting of the day was, "Have you signed the Pledge?"

Not long after this Mrs. Woodworth, an evangelist held six weeks of "protracted meetings." They were attended by crowds of people and much excitement prevailed. There was shouting, singing and loud praying. Many fell to the floor in trances and tall tales were told of visions which were seen. We, of the more quiet religious faith, went just to see what was going on and were well repaid.

Many hot political speeches were made there. People took their politics seriously and with lots of "Hurrah" in those times. Benjamin Harrison made a rousing speech there while running for the Senate. Jim Watson made one of his first appearances here when aspiring to Congress.

There were many good theatrical shows touring the country and Geo. Dunn, able manager of the Rink brought a fair share to Greensburg. One special treat was Richard Keene in Shakespeare's "Richard III." Keene afterwards became one of the country's best Shakesperian actors.

Of all the delightful home talent shows given, none so pleased the public as the K. of P. circus, put on by the Knights of Pythias. In true circus language, it was grand- magnificent- stupendous. It had everything- sawdust rings, clowns, bareback riders with paper hoops. A lordly ring master (Joe Hitt) strutted about cracking his whip; there was a German band and even red lemonade.

No one ever forgot nor will ever forget the specialties. The bloody "gladitorial" combat between two portly society gentlemen of the day. Pool Minear and Judge Dave Myers dressed only in their tight fitting flesh colored "undies" fought to the finish with broad card board swords.

Neither have they forgotten the trapeze performance of Henry Kammerling. By some strange quirk his clown costume became stuck and entangled. As he swung gaily back and forth he became tightly bound until he could only dangle helplessly from the bar. Now Henry was a very popular person, a natural clown and beloved by the whole town. But the longer he dangled, the more excited he got and he called loudly for "Help! Help!" in his dilemma. In his excitement he returned again to his native German dialect calling again and again "Untwind me back! Untwind me back!" The crowd roared with laughter and left as Henry's helpers "Unvound" him back.

A few short years later the Rink burned to the ground and what a fire! Clouds of smoke covered all that end of town as the great frame giant was consumed. With it went many sweet memories of Happy Days in Greensburg-

Floy P. Batteron

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VAGUE RECORD OF THE ROTHSCHILD FAMILIES

The Rothschilds are believed to be the first Jews to reach pioneer Decatur County.....Doubtless they were connected with the famous banking families of Europe, although there are no available records of their immigration to America nor of their peregrinations as peddlers...The brothers, Josef and Ferdinand, carrying heavy packs on their backs (according to local traditions at the end of the century), making their second trip to Milford, were so pleased with the mercantile prospects that they settled there. Evidently they were carrying considerable money, for they bought a general merchandise store with well established business and set about to expand it. They also bought a farm near the east edge of the village which is now owned and occupied by Clarence Worland.....Joe Rothschild died of a heart attack in his store about 1889. Soon thereafter Ferd sold the business and moved to Indianapolis.....Leopold Rothschild, a highly esteemed Indianapolis businessman a generation ago (popularly called Baron Rothschild) was, quite likely, a descendant of Ferd's family.....The name Rothschild is not so ancient as might be inferred. The founder of the original banking family was Mayer Anselm Bauer (1743-1812). He was born in Frankfort-amMain, Germany, and was orphaned when he was a baby. He was educated to be a teacher but obtained a job in a Hanover bank. He

prospered and early in life founded his own business in Frankfort. It was called the Red Scutcheon (Roth Schild in German) and was adopted as the family name.....The eldest of Mayer's five sons, Anselm Mayer von Rothschild became head of the Frankfort firm, while the others established branches in various foreign capitols. The chief source of their enormous wealth was in lending money to various nations of Europe.

ed-This bit about the Rothschilds of Milford has long been awaited and suggests another story-who were some of their successors, Mr. Fowler?

Mrs.
Mrs.
Mrs.
Mr. F

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF DECATUR COUNTY
GREENSBURG, INDIANA

THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 2 - No. 29

Greensburg, Indiana

September 1, 1966

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mrs. Paul Zinser
Mrs. Isophene Davis
Miss Helen M. West- Hialeah, Fla.
Mrs. Ola Freeland Irwin- Oak Lawn,
Illinois 552

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IT'S THOSE ASTERISKS AGAIN- Our recording secretary is concerned for those who have not paid their 1966 dues. Should a star appear on the address label of your copy of the BULLETIN, you should consult with her at once!!!!

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DR. D. D. DICKSON'S DEPT.- See the doctor's contribution to the program elsewhere in this issue.... One will note that he has omitted the lethal devices of fifty years ago- they were fun but still lethal! For further details ask Smiley Fowler, Frank Marlin or Paul Huber.

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THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS 1966

President-----John Parker
1st. Vice-President--Mrs. Dorothy
Doles
2nd. Vice-President-----Dr. D. D.
Dickson
Corresponding Secy.---Mrs. Robert
Dale Brown, RFD 1, St. Paul,
Indiana
Recording Secy.-----Miss Helen K.
Bussell, 711 North East St.,
Greensburg, Indiana
Treasurer-----Miss Mary E. Craig

OCCASION: Fall Meeting
SPEAKER: Miss Winifred Armstrong
DATE: Sunday, Sept. 11th,
1966 at 2:00 P. M.
Fast Time
PLACE: Parker's Pond

In keeping with the Indiana Sesqui-Centennial and the schools beginning another year, a program has been planned devoted to our early schools. Miss Winifred Armstrong of Letts and a retired teacher will relate the many experiences of her long career in the public schools. A dedicated teacher with a sense of humor, Miss Armstrong comes to us, especially well qualified as our speaker for the afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE- You are urged to bring your old school pictures, programs, textbooks, slates and pencils for a display. Nothing makes for more conversation than an old school picture and what is more interesting!

PICNIC AFTERWARD

MR. & MRS. PARKER HEREBY EXTEND THEIR USUAL INVITATION TO THE MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS TO BRING THEIR BASKETS IF THEY WISH TO DO SO.

PRESIDENT'S REQUEST- That you bring your own chair- everybody has a lawn chair.

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BRING AS MANY GUESTS AS YOU LIKE!
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME!

OLD TOY CONTEST AND DEMONSTRATION

Many toys our grandparents had were home made and the knowledge of the manufacture of these items is being lost. We wish to have each of you MAKE a copy of one or several toys you used when you were a child. There will be three classes of entries as follows:

CLASS 1 Home Made - 1st & 2nd Prizes (Owner demonstrates)

1. BEST SQUIRT GUN
2. BEST POP GUN
3. BEST SLING SHOT
4. BEST KITE
5. BEST WHISTLE
6. BEST HORSE FIDDLE
7. BEST STEAM TOY

CLASS 2 3 prizes

BEST OLD TOY, EITHER MANUFACTURED OR HOME MADE.

CLASS 3

THE LONGEST LIST OF HOME MADE TOYS - 1st & 2nd Prizes

D. D. Dickson M. D.

THE LAST MEETING- The Hon. Willard Low of Westport, currently serving in the State Legislature as joint representative from Decatur and Jennings counties, spoke from his own slides on SOUTHERN INDIANA. Mr. Low had a full house and an attentive audience. The Editor came away particularly impressed with his shot of the George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge at Vincennes- a symphony in concrete- if viewed from the lower level. This, one must do, he explained, if you are to enjoy the beauty and architecture of a bridge. Last but not the least were his views in and around Westport, bearing out the fact that part of our heritage is at home. Thank you, Mr. Low, for another evening of fine entertainment.

TOMMY THOMSON- Writes that his grandfather Orville Thomson, who was born in 1823, told him that the oldest house in Greensburg, was located at the Southwest corner of Railroad and East Streets. His grandfather further stated that when he was 12 years old, that the house was a full log cabin. Tommy goes on to say that about the turn of the century, it was still a log cabin. Today it is a modest little frame house- covered with weather boards to deceive you.

DID YOU KNOW- In 1895 Washington township had thirteen rural schools participating in the second annual Closing Exercises and Commencement. This affair began at 9:00 A. M. with a grand march from the Court House to the Rink Opera House led by the Greensburg Brass Band. The morning session was devoted to recitations and music with all of the schools taking part. The program for the occasion indicates that forty-eight numbers were offered!!!! Commencement held in the afternoon (we assume) again consisted of musical numbers and declamations by the graduates. There was no featured speaker. Trustee James E. Caskey presented the diplomas. The teachers by districts were as follows-

Clara Lambert	1	Mamie Foster	8
Minnie Miller	2	Gertie Walker	9
Bertha Doles	3	Mable Kerchavel	10
Kate Dawson	4	T. M. Clark	11
Glant G. Welsh	5	Mary Terhune	11
W. F. Gilchrist	6	Jessie Donnell	12
Bert Morgan	7	Helen Rankin	13

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THIS AND THAT- The first railroad accident occurred in Adams in 1859. One person injured. Two horses killed....Early settlers of Adams twp. were the Heaton, Tanners, Zeiglers, Isleys, Shelhorns, Adkins, McCartys, Robisons, Pearces, Petersons and the Pauls....Elijah Davis is credited with being the first settler in Sand Creek twp. He is known to have had a tract of land there in 1820....It is logical to assume that that Westport was named after Westport, Kentucky....During the Civil War, all of Westport's town officers enlisted in the Union Army, leaving that town without any government....The V. G. & R. Ry. was completed in 1880. The Southern Indiana Ry. came in 1892.... Harris City quarries provided some 3,000 carloads of limestone for the Statehouse at Indianapolis....The first train to pass through

Greensburg made its first run in the summer of 1853. By November it was possible to take a train to Lawrenceburg, thence to Cincinnati by boat....Decatur County has an area of 241,920 acres....The official seal of Decatur County features a nightingale with a bough in its mouth....Salt Creek twp. was organized Sept. 5, 1836. In the early period farmers were unable to raise hogs there with any degree of success until the bears were exterminated. Robert Ross and John Harding were the first to locate there in the early 1820s....New Point once was known officially as Rossburg P. O....Mail facilities for Greensburg and Decatur County were established in 1822....On June 14, 1916 the D. A. R. dedicated a marker at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and North Ireland Street, to commemorate the Michigan State Road surveyed 1828-1830 and completed in 1837....

The first store in Fugit twp. was opened at Springhill in 1823 by James Conwell of Franklin County....Clarksburg had a street fair with ferris wheel, merry-go-round and all during the teens....Booth Tarkington, noted Hoosier novelist, frequently visited his grandfather Tarkington at the farm home now occupied by Frank Nieman on U. S. 421 Northwest of Greensburg....Edwin May designed the present Decatur County courthouse. He was an associate in the design of the State Capitol....William Jennings Bryan here on a speaking tour in 1908 referred to the courthouse as "the finest specimen of Gothic architecture that he had seen in his travels throughout the world." Other authorities have called it Romanesque architecture....The clock face on the tower measures seven feet three inches in diameter....Decatur County was originally a part of Delaware County....Decatur County had 23 physicians and 12 lawyers in 1848. Today it has 10 physicians and 14 lawyers....The present county jail is the third of its kind, built in 1880....The 7th Indiana, a local regiment in the Civil War, has strong claims for saving Culp's Hill at the battle of Gettysburg....

Among other crops grown in Decatur County in 1881, were 1265 acres of flax and 186 bushels of cranberries. Cherries dried 44,411 gallons....Westport had no saloons after 1881, three prior to 1881....Newberry Wheeldon donated land and platted Forest Hill in 1852. Its original name was an adaptation of his name--Newburg....Decatur County had no roads to speak of until 1863.

THIS AND THAT, for the most part, was taken from the SESQUICENTENNIAL ISSUE of the Greensburg Daily News, consisting of 5 sections, dated August 18, 1966. Copies of the issue will be mailed anywhere in the U. S. for 25 cents. Remit to the Daily News. Highly recommended- ed.

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PARKER'S POND- If going from Greensburg, follow SR 3 and 46 to the junction West of Greensburg. Here turn left or South on SR 3. Continue South on SR 3 to the second cross road. (Look for a sign or a flag here) Turn right or West on a stone road. Go one-quarter mile. LOOK FOR THE FLAG POLE ON THE RIGHT.

SOME REMINISCENCES ON THE SETTLEMENT OF DECATUR COUNTY, INDIANA

By William W. Parker

In writing this history of Decatur County, I am repeating a small part of what has been recorded before. These are facts you already know, but some may have become dim in your memory. I decided to make this brief but soon realized that a brief history could not do justice to our county. Therefore I have attempted to confine my remarks to the early or primitive part of our settlement, that is the first ten or fifteen years.

I believe it right that we should think back and remind ourselves of the gratitude and debt we owe to these people, our ancestors, who, leaving friends and loved ones, pushed westward into the "New Purchase," opened up by the Treaty of St. Mary's, Ohio, in 1818. These men and women of yesterday, by their heroic efforts laid the foundation for our noble country.

Gladstone once wrote, "The man who does not worthily estimate his own dead forefathers will himself do little to add credit to, or do honor to his country."

The hardships and unceasing labor that had to be endured to establish a home and rear a family in the primeval forests that shaded every acre of our country cannot now be understood or realized.

This change from the wild woods to our present state of civilization and cultivation has been wrought from the opening of the Land Office in Brookville, Indiana, on the first Monday of October, 1820.

The First Settlers

Prior to the opening of the Land Office a few people were already living in the confines of our present county. They were known as "Squatters," who were mostly hunters and trappers, a restless people whom the spirit of adventure ever kept on the frontiers, in advance of civilization, brave, skilled in the mysteries of woodcraft, self-reliant, cool, and hospitable. On the opening of the Land Office some of these people moved on and others like John Fugit remained and entered the lands they were living on. It might be well to trace the migration of John Fugit from his home in the East to our county, for it describes the general pattern of the movement of the early settlers to the West.

John Fugit was born in West Virginia in 1770, where he lived until his marriage, when he moved to Floyd County, Kentucky, and a short time later, in 1808, to near Cincinnati. In 1810 we find him and his family living near Cedar Grove in Franklin county, Indiana, where he lived until 1818, when owing to the hostility of the Indians, they took refuge in the old fort eight miles west of Brookville. In the spring of 1819, he left his home on Pipe Creek and moved over on the "New Purchase." He built his cabin a mile east of what is now

Clarksburg. In 1825 he moved to near Turner's Corner in Clay Township and later to Milford, where he died in 1844. With the Fugits, who were a family of father, mother, six sons and three daughters, all who averaged over six feet in height, came the Griffy Griffiths, who settled one mile west of Clarksburg and Elias Jarrett, who settled near the Fugits. (This information was furnished by Mrs. Mary Fugit Garrison who was living in Greensburg in 1880.)

Surveying or Laying Out the New County

In the early part of 1820, the Federal Government sent out surveyors to lay out the new county, named in honor of Commodore Stephen Decatur.

The work was done by Thomas Hendricks and Samuel Huston, assisted by Jacob and Silas Stewart, John Gageby and Samuel Logan.

As we visualize the dense forests, the uneven terrain, the streams and swamps, it is amazing at the accuracy of the job done by these men. Errors in their surveying are very evident by the offset of a few feet or even several rods in the corners of farms or the jogs in the roads. When the roads were laid out and built, the builders usually followed the regular boundary lines and we had many right or left corners or jogs as they were often called. These right angled turns were not too bad in the "horse and buggy days" but with the advent of the automobile were the cause of so many accidents that many have been changed from angles to curves. Many of us can remember when the curve on State Road 3 at North Bend Plaza was two right angled corners.

The roads of the county were merely marked trails mostly radiating from Greensburg. Some pretty well followed the boundary lines, such as the road to Milroy, but usually they took off in the general direction of the outlying settlements. Early roads went to Milroy, Clarksburg, Brookville, Vernon, Hartsville, Milford, St. Omer, and Layton's Mill, later known as Slabtown. This road became a part of the "Old Michigan Road." An early trail was blazed from the Flatrock River bottoms through Clarksburg to Brookville.

Although the economic condition of the county was rapidly improving little if anything was being done to "lift us out of the mud and mire," until 1863, when a petition was presented to the County Commissioners for the improvement of the Vernon Road from Greensburg to the Washington-Marion Township line. Soon 60 more miles were authorized.

Entering of the Land

The first Land Patent was issued to John Shellhorn in the northwest part of the county, between Big and Little Flatrock Rivers. Those of us in the 1964 fall tour of our Historical Society will recall seeing this original patent and the plat of Rockville, a town the Shellhorns laid out on this land. They visioned Rockville as the county seat of our county and laid out a public square and several streets, among them Main, Walnut, Water, Mulberry and Market. After the boundary lines of the county were finally determined, the county seat was laid

out by John Potter, on land entered by Thomas Hendricks, and at the request of Mrs. Hendricks, tradition says, was called Greensburg in honor of her old home in Pennsylvania.

From the opening of the land office in Brookville on the first Monday in October, 1820, to December 31, 1820, 153 patents were issued for lands in this county. We might mention the names of a few of these early patent holders whose names are familiar to us today. The names of Linville, Rankin, Martin, Hopkins, Throp, Drake, Doles, Hendricks, Jewitt, Shellhorn, Kemble, Logan, McCoy, Donnell, Meek, Critzer, Hamilton, and many others. Altogether from October 3, 1820 to December 31, 1825 (four years and three months) 761 patents were issued for lands in this county. These people, our ancestors, made this county one of the foremost in our state.

It was fortunate that little, if any of this land was taken up by non-resident speculators, who could patiently wait in their distant homes for the actual settlers, by their labors to make these lands valuable.

This condition caused much bitterness and disappointment in Kentucky. This and opposition to slavery caused many Kentuckians, among whom was Thomas Lincoln and his family, to move to Indiana.

Organization of the New County

John Fugit was a Justice of Peace in Franklin County and on moving to this county brought his credentials with him and, while possibly not strictly legal, continued to represent the law here. On the organization of the county he was elected one of the first Associate Judges. These judges served as advisors to the Judge, who usually represented several counties. In the absence of the Judge, which was often, they had the authority to carry on the business of the court.

In May of 1822, the first board of commissioners was sworn in by Henry Talbott, who had been appointed Clerk of the County by Governor Jennings. The first matter of business was the division of the county into townships which was as follows: Fugit on the east, Adams on the west, and Washington in between, all extending the full length of the county. As the population increased, these townships were redivided until there were nine. The board appointed three constables, a superintendent of schools, a County Treasurer, a lister of taxes, and an overseer of the poor. They decided what prices the tavern keepers could charge their customers. They also ordered that elections be held in the townships for Justices of the Peace.

The Settlement of the Land

Because of better drainage, the land along the streams was taken up first. The frontiersman wanted good soil, good timber and a good site for his cabin, usually near a stream. If there was no spring he could dig an open well and have plenty of water. The partly filled depression of an old well often marks the only clue to the location of an early cabin. Sometimes the men came first, built the cabin and went

- back for their families, but more often the entire family came at one time with all their worldly possessions, living in bark or skin shelters until the cabin was finished.

The first cabins, due to the urgency of a roof over their heads, were very crude, some with only three sides. The normal size was about sixteen by twenty feet, made of round logs notched at the corners. The roof was made of clapboards, usually split out of oak, one half inch thick, eight or ten inches wide and four feet long. These rested on poles and were kept in place by similar poles laid on top and tied down. A fireplace of round sticks plastered with mud was built in on end. No wonder so many early cabins were destroyed by fire. Early floors were of dirt, later covered by puncheons, which were split timber made as smooth as possible with the axe and adze. A door was made of thin split timber pinned to cross pieces and hung with leather hinges and secured with the traditional latch string. The window was made by cutting out a section of log and covering the opening with a scraped skin or oil paper in winter and leaving it open in summer. It is truly remarkable what these sturdy pioneers could accomplish with only an axe, a saw, and various sizes of augers. No nails, glass, brick or sawed lumber was available for these primitive homes. The furniture was made with the same tools.

With the advent of more settlers, many of whom were skilled workmen, houses were built of hewn logs, some even of stone and brick. Grist mills, sash saw mills, cabinet shops, tanneries, woolen mills and blacksmith shops began to appear and the economic condition of the people rapidly improved.

Clearing the Land--Work of the Men

After completion of the new home, the men, often aided by the women, began the clearing of the land. Three methods were used. One was to clear it "smooth" by cutting down and burning all the trees and undergrowth at one time. Another and most used method was to cut and burn all trees and underbrush under eighteen inches in diameter and deaden by girdling the remaining trees. After the first year some crops were raised in these clearings. The easiest way, if such was possible, was to deaden the entire tract, wait five years, and then go in with axe and fire to complete the job.

House, barn raisings and log rollings were pretty much a community effort, neighbors coming from miles around for these events.

I will never forget stories told me by Uncle Tommy Meek, grandfather of Mr. Homer Meek, who lived next door to us in Greensburg, around the turn of the century. He was a powerfully built man and prided himself on being selected to carry up one end of the logs. He mentioned gearing up the old mare in the fall and leaving the harness on all winter so as to be ready to slide in a shock of fodder on the sled whenever needed. Log rolling was a term used to describe the rolling or piling of logs in piles for burning or rolling into ravines to get them out of the way of the plow.

Mr. George Sefton, who at one time owned the land now belonging to Mr. Emmert Maple in Clinton Township, told me of the many fine logs he helped destroy. To the settlers they were weeds standing in the way of food for him and his family.

Work of the Women

The labor of the men was hard, but that of the women was equally hard. All of the cooking and baking was done in the open fireplace and they were directly exposed to the direct heat and often the smoke was unbearable. They spun the tow, flax and wool which was woven on a loom into cloth for their garments.

The big and little spinning wheels were found in every home. On the small wheel was spun the tow and flax. Thread from which the sheets, towels, table cloths, shirts, pants and numerous other garments were made. On the large wheel the wool was spun to be used in making the blankets, flannels, jeans, linseys, stockings etc. The wool was sometimes washed in a hewn trough, tramped by the children, changing the water frequently. The women were very ingenious in coloring or dyeing the wool. The white wool made white yarn. The black fleece, the black. Often three shades of black were obtained from one fleece. Colors were obtained mostly from native plants. Black walnut and butternut hulls made a dark and light brown dye, saffron yellow, blood root red, sassafras pink and indigo blue. Blue was a very popular color. The name "Blue Jeans" has been carried down to the present day.

Lye was a very important item. It was made by saving the liquid after water was drained through hardwood ashes in a wooden trough. This was mixed with fats to make soap. Lye was also used in removing the corn hulls, in the making of hominy, a very important food to the settlers.

The stately sugar maples, abundant over most of the county, supplied sap for molasses and on further boiling, crystallized into maple sugar. To my knowledge there were no salt licks in this county, so salt had to be imported.--Continued in next issue.

* * * * *

If the U. S. Postal Zip Code does not appear on the address label of this Bulletin - or if it is incorrect, please notify the Recording Secretary:

Miss Helen Bussell
711 N. East St.
Greensburg, Indiana - 47240

The Post Office asks that the Zip Code be a part of each address. And we feel sure that you do not want to miss a copy of the Bulletin.

If you wish to join "the Early Birds of '67" you may send your 1967 dues to Miss Bussell at the same time. Your 1967 membership card will be mailed to you.

Thank you!

THE BULLETIN

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Volume 2 - No. 30

Greensburg, Indiana

November 26, 1966

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mrs. Raymond Carr
Mrs. Marie Scheidler
Mrs. Ina Coombs
Mr. Russell Thornburg
Mrs. Ethel Thornburg
Mrs. Alma Kirby
Mrs. William M. Metz 559

OCCASION: Eighth Annual Dinner
Meeting and Election of
Officers
SPEAKER: Hubert H. Hawkins,
Director, Indiana Historical
Bureau and Secretary,
Indiana Historical Society
DATE: Saturday, December 3, 1966
at 6:30 P.M.
PLACE: Greensburg High School,
505 E. Central Avenue,
Greensburg, Indiana.
Entrance on Lathrop St.
opposite Gymnasium

PRESIDENT PARKER'S COMMITTEES
FOR THE DINNER AS FOLLOWS-

NOMINATING - Mary Hamilton, Ch.
Mariam Brown
Donna Hatfield

AUDITING -- Helen Osborn
Dorothy Shannon

DECORATING - Marcia Batterton
Janet Fogg
Carol Meek
Kathryn Meek

FOOD ----- Margaret Shazer

TICKETS ---- Mary Beeson
Mabel Hurt

CALLING ---- Vivian Batterton
Glenn Gilchrist
Anna Paul Lowe
Helen Marlin
Mary Rutherford

DISPLAY ---- Frank Guilkey
Paul H. Huber
Frank Marlin
Charles Osburn

RECEPTION -- Mr. & Mrs. Loren Garner
Mr. & Mrs. Paul H. Huber
Mr. & Mrs. Walter B. Lowe
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Marlin

RESERVATIONS

If you have not already been contacted,
please call any one on the calling
committee (which is listed elsewhere
in this issue) not later than
Wednesday Nov. 30th. if you plan to
attend the dinner. Tickets are \$1.75
each and are to be obtained at the
door.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COME FOR
DINNER, FEEL FREE TO ATTEND THE
MEETING LATER. EVERYBODY IS
WELCOME!!

Mr. Hawkins who was the speaker at
our first meeting held June 5th.,
1959 comes again to help us celebrate
INDIANA'S 150TH BIRTHDAY. A native
of Marion County, a history major,
college professor and currently the
secretary of the Indiana Historical
Society, Mr. Hawkins is eminently
qualified to speak on any subject
in his field. Plan to attend and hear
this outstanding Hoosier.

THE LAST MEETING--This was the fall meeting held at Parker's Pond. Miss Winifred Armstrong, a retired teacher spoke to the group on the early schools of Decatur County. Coming from an old Sand Creek township family, and a large family- her ancestors teachers before her, her father a township trustee, Miss Armstrong knew whereof she spoke. Her paper was well researched. But the choice moments came when she departed from the text long enough to tell in her own inimitable way some of the funny but true happenings of her years in the class room... A teacher of the old school, Miss Armstrong described the discipline or lack of discipline in the schools of today but otherwise recognized that these are changing times and that the problems are many more and more complex... Hers was one of the better papers to be presented the Society and we are hoping that it may appear in the BULLETIN at a later date.... In keeping with the occasion, a spelling match was held afterward with Mrs. Chas. Loucks pronouncing the words. The speller, all former champions, took RENSSELAER and ASAFOETIDA in their stride but ASSASSIN laid them low. Mr. Chas. Osburn successfully spelled the word and remains the champion.

SPEAKING OF FAR AWAY PLACES--(Mrs.) Carol S. Moffatt, writing for the Webster Papers Project, Baker Memorial Library, Hanover, New Hampshire (Dartmouth College) would appreciate copies of any letters by or to Daniel Webster, and/or other manuscript material pertaining to the famous statesman. Strange to say, memorabilia of this sort often does bob up in the most unheard of places. Members please comply if you have information.

MINERVA MORRIS- Mrs. Morris died in Indianapolis on December 23, 1928 at the age of 102. The subject of a medical research program in factors affecting longevity, she had a grand-son Richard Morris - who JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL, Baltimore, Md. believes was a doctor in Greensburg. They would also appreciate any information about Mrs. Morris, her husband and her children. Address any replies to the editor of the BULLETIN. Added note- The editor has knowledge of a Dr. Frederick S. Morris, who was born in Greensburg and who later became a famous surgeon in Pittsburg.

WANTED: Postcard pictures of Indiana court houses signed by the sender, for a future display and eventually to go into the archives of the Society. Please address them- Editor of the BULLETIN
Decatur County Historical Society
Greensburg, Indiana 47240

CRAVER- Mrs. Jos. Edgar Craver, RFD 1, Monroeville, New Jersey, would appreciate information of the Craver family. Joseph Craver and Susannah, his wife, stopped in Indiana in Franklin and Decatur Counties in the fifties. A child, Joseph Abbott Craver was born in Indiana in 1854. Please write to her direct.

COUNTY STRUCK TWICE BY CYCLONES

Two cyclones have been recorded in Decatur County, the first in Sandcreek Township, the other in Adams Township. In the latter catastrophe a young man was decapitated when a flying plank struck him. That was in 1875 and was recalled by old residents of the St. Paul and Germantown communities less than twenty years ago.

The earlier instance, 1838, was lost to history until revealed in old family papers kept by the late Rev. J. H. Meredith, a county native who died in San Antonio, Texas.

Mr. Meredith said pioneers called it the "Big Wind". It struck first in the edge of Jackson Township, roaring over into Sandcreek and pursued a course alternately in a straight line and as a twister. Both of Mr. Meredith's grandfathers lost their homes in the sudden disaster.

Much of the story was told by his uncle, Jesse Christman, who had lived with his family in a log cabin in a clearing. Very tall trees surrounded the clearing.

It was about 10 at night when lightning and thunder came with suddenness, Christman said, and the wind was so terrific that the family could not hear each other speak. The cabin's one door was jammed by a huge tree limb so that it could not be opened. After the storm had abated to some extent he crawled out of the small window. When morning came oxen were hitched to the branch but could not move it. Eventually it was chopped away.

Meredith's grandfather, Jonathan Robbins, said that the family worst afflicted was that of Noah Merriman, whose cabin was crushed while nine persons were inside. Merriman was crippled for life, but the others escaped injury.

The area affected was between Letts and Westport. The storm blew itself out before doing much damage in Marion Township.

-- Smiley Fowler

EAGLES VS. CARDINALS

In the early 1920s the Eagles baseball team attained a high place among the state's amateurs. As a civic promotion it stood on a par with the Tower Tree in the estimation of the Businessmen's Association.

At the height of its fame the manager, Bill Dinsmore, received a communication from the St. Louis Cardinals, saying that the Cards would be traveling to Cleveland on a certain date and would be glad to stop over in Greensburg for a warm-up session.

The big day came, and Littell's ball park was packed an hour before the play started.

The Cardinals manager, in a confidential chat with Dinsmore, inquired: "How would you like the game to come out?"

Bill, less noted for his modesty than for his managerial ability, advised him firmly: "You fellows play your game and we'll play ours!"

Well, my memory is hazy about the exact score, but let it be said that the Cards were a jolly bunch of good-natured fellows and enjoyed a leisurely practice session.

---Ex-Fan.

SOME REMINISCENCES ON THE SETTLEMENT OF DECATUR COUNTY, INDIANA (Continued from the last issue)

EARLY AGRICULTURE

The early agriculture was very crude and difficult. After the land was first cleared, the many stumps and intertwining roots made use of the plow impossible, so the work was done mostly by the hoe. In spite of this, due to the wonderful fertility of this virgin soil, some crops were produced the first year and good crops the second year. Wheat was broadcast by hand and dug in with a husky limb. There is a record of some wheat being produced in the Flat Rock River bottoms, in 1822. This was harvested by a reaphook or a cradle and threshed out with a frail or tramped out by horses or oxen, the same method used in Biblical times.

The hogs, usually marked as to ownership, were turned out in the spring, to fend for themselves. By fall if the mast was plentiful, some might weigh as much as one hundred twenty-five pounds and were ready for butchering. The round-up of these semi-wild hogs was quite an event and took the combined effort of the men and boys of the entire community. There was often quite a bit of controversy as to the ownership of the hogs.

The round-up of the cows at milking time was a duty of the boys and girls. Bells were hung around the cows necks, so they would give their whereabouts away and be easier found.

EARLY INDUSTRIES

Before the advent of grist mills, the grain for meal was either taken to Brookville, by horseback, a four day journey, or pounded by hand in a mortar, a method learned from the Indians. Soon many mills began to appear along the streams of the County. These early mills were very crude, little more than corn crackers. The ground grain being bolted or sifted by hand. Most mills were powered by water, but a few used horsepower. A steam mill was built in Clay Township and one, one mile west of Greensburg in the eighteen thirties.

John Paul is credited with building the first mill in the county, at a site on Mill Creek northeast of St. Paul. Among the prominent millers were the Critzers, Eli Critzer built a mill south of Milford in 1826. This writer remembers taking corn to this mill in the early part of the century to be ground into meal. At this time the mill was still using waterpower and was operated by Mr. Bert Sanders, son-in-law of the Critzers.

This mill and the Picayune mill at Downeyville, bring fond memories of many school time picnics. No school term was hardly complete without the picnic on the last day. Al Waybright or Alec Trindle furnishing the transportation in their two horse backs.

Saw mills, tan yards, woolen mills, brick yards and cabinet shops began to appear. James Gageby came in 1821 and opened a cabinet shop on the northwest corner of the public square in Greensburg. A log hotel was built on the present site of the Taylor Hotel. Henry Talbott was an early storekeeper. John and Martin Jamison were hatters. John Layton was handy with tools and opened a shop southeast of Greensburg and made all sorts of necessary articles, as flex breaks, spinning wheels, plow woods, ox yokes, looms, etc. He also built a "rope walk" and made rope and twine, from a variety of nettle which grew in abundance in the low lands. This nettle was also used as a substitute for flax for the manufacture of linen. John House of south of Greensburg was a gun smith and also done mill work and blacksmithing.

These are but a few of the many industries springing up in the early years of the new county.

Since whiskey was thought to be indispensable, still houses were erected very early, often as many as five or six in a township. At least it was a simple means of disposing of the surplus grain.

CHURCH HISTORY

Notwithstanding the hardships and worries of backwoods life, these people were very religious. They brought their religion with them and practiced it wherever they were. The circuit riders of the Gospel were always welcome and were treated with respect. So our church history begins with the first settlers.

The Sandcreek Baptist Church was the first organized church in the county, organized in January 1822. In the same year the Kingston Presbyterian Church was founded under the name "Sandcreek Church. The Springhill Presbyterian Church followed in 1825.

The first Methodist serman was delivered in March, 1822, at the double log cabin of Thomas Hendricks, the only house on the site of Greensburg. In 1831 a Christian Church was organized at Clarksburg, known as the Church of Christ at Saltcreek. There were around 15 organized churches in the county by 1835.

SCHOOL HISTORY

It was early recognized that religion, morality and knowledge were necessary for good government. So schools and the means of education were early encouraged.

When Congress, in 1804, passed the Act ordering the sale of public lands in Indiana, there was a proviso by which every 16th section, in each township was set aside for support of schools, and to apply any funds raised on these lands to be used for school purposes. The early schools were either "kept" in a home or in a log structure built in the community, and seldom lasted more than a few weeks in the year.

These were usually subscription schools. A number of parents combining to hire a teacher, some who could barely read or write themselves. As a rule, however, they were experts with the hickory switch. These early schools struggled along, doing a pretty good job with the adverse conditions of these times, until in 1851 a new State Constitution was adopted, by which free public schools were ordered and the education of the children was rapidly advanced. About the only thing in common between these early students and our present students is neither has to climb stairs.

FRONTIER PESTS AND AFFLICTIONS

The early settlers had to contend against invisible as well as visible foes. No part of America, outside of the tropics was more subject to malaria than were the lands of our state. The dense forests, in whose damp shade, accumulations of rotting leaves, fallen timber and other vegetable remains, with the swamps of stagnant putrid water, made an ideal condition for the spread of malaria or "ague".

The suffering from the chills and high fever of malaria is a most pathetic part of our history. Almost every family was stricken with some form of the disease. So dreadful was this disease it would often last for months or even years. This continued until the land was cleared of the forests, and the swamps drained by open and tile ditches.

There was a mysterious and fatal disease called "Milk-sick", from which people and livestock died in great numbers. It was thought to have been caused by the use of milk, butter or cheese from cows which had grazed on some poisonous plant. Nancy Hanks Lincoln was a victim of this disease.

Venomous reptiles also took their toll. Rattlesnakes and copperheads, the only known poisonous snakes in our county were so numerous the settler and his family had to be always alert. Horses, cows and even dogs fell victim to the venom of these reptiles. For some reason hogs are mortal enemies of snakes, and immune to the venom. They aided greatly in the elimination of this menace. Whiskey was considered the best remedy and was administered in large draughts to the victim.

Harding, in his history of our county recounts the killing of several hundred rattlesnakes, in one day near the grist mill of John Paul on Mill creek in Adams township.

Consumption, croup, inward cancer, mortification (Gangrene) and pneumonia were prevalent.

Work in the woods was very hazardous. Many a settler was crushed to death or crippled for life by falling trees or limbs.

I realize I must bring this paper to a close, yet there is so much more that could be written and probably should.

I have not mentioned anything about the recreation or fun on the frontier, and we do know that they were a fun loving people.

Many are the stories of the husking bees, the quilting parties, the spelling bees, the wrestling matches, the foot races, the turkey shoots, etc. Also the many interesting and amusing anecdotes that could be recounted.

I hope if someone should read these pages, they will get a sense of how interesting the story of our county really is.

I have enjoyed the research and the writing of these pages and if no one, beside myself should read them, I will feel amply repaid.

WILLIAM W. PARKER. 1965

THE TREE ON THE TOWER

In dear old Decatur County
There's a treasure we each hold dear,
It's known all over the country
And it's fame is known far and near.

The fame of this wonderful tree
Stands as a symbol to you and me,
For, it is an out-standing land-mark
This wonderful high-towering tree.

We are thankful, that one day wasplanted
A seed in the Court House tower,
That God cherished and watered
Until it came forth to flower.

Now, as the years have gone by
And the tree in its glory still stands,
On the Court-House-Tower, in Greensburg
Cared for by loving hands.

We hail thee dear tree on the tower
We pray, for-ever you stand,
Triumphant there, through the years
And in all of our hearts, in the land.

Mary Lue Miller

AU
D
Mrs. Miller is the daughter of the former Dr. John L. Smith
who practiced in Clarksburg when Earl Jarrard lived there as a boy.
We hope to hear from her again. Ed.

HOBBY SHOW- If you have a hobby, bring something that will portray
what you do in your spare time- or better still call a member of the
committee, and he will pick it up, so that the item will be displayed
properly. Who knows what our President's hobby is? Wait and see!!

Members can still qualify as EARLY BIRDS by paying their 1967
dues at the Dinner Meeting!!!